

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 OMB-01

IO-13 SAB-02 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /068 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6136

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 1787

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PN

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE ON NEUTRALITY TREATY
RATIFICATION

REF: PANAMA 1779

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. GOP FOREIGN MINISTRY RELEASED OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE
ON RATIFICATION OF NEUTRALITY TREATY EVENING OF
THURSDAY, MARCH 16. COMMUNIQUE WAS DESCRIBED ON
2200 EVENING TELEVISION NEWSCASTS, BROADCAST IN
FULL LATER IN EVENING AND APPEARS IN "CRITICA"
AND "MATUTINO" FOR FRIDAY MORNING, MARCH 17.

2. FULL TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE, AS TRANSLATED BY FBIS,
FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE: ON THE OCCASION OF THE
SIGNING OF THE TORRIJOS-CARTER TREATIES, THE
PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT, IN ORDER TO FULFILL ARTICLE
274 OF THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION, FULLY EXPLAINED
TO THE PEOPLE THE SCOPE OF THOSE INSTRUMENTS. AFTER
A DEBATE IN WHICH THE SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS OF
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THE TREATIES VERY FREELY EXPRESSED THEIR VIEW-
POINTS, THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE GAVE THEIR APPROVAL
TO THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH RESULTED IN THE TREATIES
SIGNED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ON 7 SEPTEMBER LAST
YEAR IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LEADERS OF THE AMERICAN
CONTINENT.

IN AN OPEN AND EXEMPLARY DEMONSTRATION OF DEMOCRACY, THE U.S. SENATE HAS INTENSELY DEBATED THESE TREATIES AND GIVEN ITS APPROVAL TO THE TREATY ON THE PERMANENT NEUTRALITY OF THE PANAMA CANAL. IN SO DOING IT INTRODUCED SOME CONDITIONS OR UNDERSTANDINGS TO CLARIFY, IN ITS OPINION, THE TRUE MEANING OF THOSE INSTRUMENTS.

SINCE THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE GAVE THEIR ACCEPTANCE TO TWO TREATIES, THAT IS TO SAY, THE TREATY ON THE PERMANENT NEUTRALITY OF THE PANAMA CANAL AND THE PANAMAN CANAL TREATY, THE GOVERNMENT FEELS IT IS ADVISABLE NOT TO ISSUE A JUDGMENT ON THE SENATE DECISION REGARDING THE TREATY ON THE PERMANENT NEUTRALITY OF THE PANAMA CANAL AND WAIT UNTIL THE SENATE MAKES A PRONOUNCEMENT ON THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY.

ONCE THIS OCCURS, AN EVALUATION WILL BE MADE BY THE UNDERSTANDINGS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE POPULAR WILL EXPRESSED IN THE PLEBISCITE HAS BEEN DISTORTED. THE PATRIOTIC DECISION OF THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE WAS BASED ON TWO TREATIES AND SO LONG AS ONE OF THE TREATIES IS PENDING A SENATE DECISION, THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT HAVE GIVEN A DEFINITE ANSWER TO THE PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION AGREED UPON WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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PANAMA IN THE TWO TREATIES.

THIS EXPLAINS THE DECISION OF THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT, LED BY GENERAL TORRIJOS AND UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF ENGINEER LAKAS, OF NOT MAKING ANY PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE VARIOUS CLARIFICATIONS WHICH THE U.S. SENATE HAS MADE OR MAY MAKE TO THE TREATIES UNTIL WE HAVE THE OFFICIAL TEXTS OF THOSE CLARIFICATIONS TO BOTH TREATIES.

ONCE WE HAVE THOSE DOCUMENTS IN OUR POSSESSION WE WILL STUDY THEM THOROUGHLY (CON TODA SEVERIDAD) AND WILL INFORM THE PEOPLE OF THE CONCLUSIONS REACHED IN HARMONY WITH OUR CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AND PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW.

IN THE MEANTIME, WE ADVISE THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE TO BE CALM. WE HAVE CHOSEN NEGOTIATIONS AS THE MEANS OF LIBERATION AS ONE OF THE EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENTS IN ATTAINING OUR DECOLONIZATION, PERFECTING OUR INDEPENDENCE AND RECOVERING THE CANAL IN ORDER TO MAKE OF IT THE PROPER INSTRUMENT OF OUR

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

LET US TRUST THAT THE FINAL RESULT OF NEGOTIATIONS
PROCESS WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED WITH THE EXCHANGE
OF THE RATIFICATION INSTRUMENTS IN PANAMA CITY
WILL MEET OUR PRINCIPAL DEMANDS ON A FIRM BASIS
OF NATIONAL DIGNITY, RESPECT FOR OUR RIGHT TO
SELF-DETERMINATION AND OUR TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.
(SIGNED) PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY. END QUOTE
END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: THE TIGHT-LIPPED AUSTERITY
OF THIS OFFICIAL STATEMENT CONTRASTS SLIGHTLY
WITH THE FORCED OPTIMISM OF ESCOBAR'S SPEECH TO
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THE NATION LAST NIGHT. THERE IS LITTLE OF THE
TENTATIVE APPROVAL WHICH MARKED ESCOBAR'S
SPEECH. THE WATCHWORD IS STRICTLY "WAIT AND SEE",
BUTTRESSED BY THE ASSURANCE THAT THE TWO TREATIES,
ONCE APPROVED BY THE SENATE, WILL BE SUBMITTED TO
SEVERE SCRUTINY BY THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT.
AN EXHORTATION TO "HAVE FAITH" IN THE END RESULT
OF THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS IS BALANCED OFF BY A
NOT-TOO-SUBTLE REMINDER THAT NEGOTIATION IS ONLY
"ONE OF THE EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENTS TO ACHIEVE OUR
DECOLONIZATION."

4. TORRIJOS IS OBVIOUSLY NOT SURE WHETHER HE CAN
GET AWAY WITH ACCEPTING THE DECONCINI RESERVATION.
HOLY WEEK, SCHOOL VACATIONS AND THE RELIEF THAT THE
TREATY HAS PASSED WILL GIVE HIM SOME TIME. HE
IS GOING TO USE THAT TIME TO READ THE PUBLIC PULSE--
TO SEE IF THE SENATE HAS GIVEN HIM A BIGGER
SERVING OF CROW THAN HE CAN EAT. END CONFIDENTIAL.
JORDEN

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